



System Training and Response (STaR) Team – SAIS Information Series

Defining the First Day of Membership

This document is intended to describe procedures for defining the first day of school membership for students who attend Arizona public schools, who are tuitioned-out to private schools, for preschool students with disabilities who participate in Head Start programs and for preschool students who participate in Early Childhood Block Grant, State Family Literacy, Title I Even Start or Migrant Education Even Start programs.

Background

Prior to fiscal year 2007, the first day of school membership (enrollment date) for a student was strictly defined as the first day the student received instruction. A student had to be physically present in the school and seated for instruction to be counted as a member of the school. Now, the first day of school membership for continuing and pre-enrolled students has been redefined by the Arizona Department of Education's School Finance Section in policy that is in effect for fiscal year 2007.

School Finance Policy SF-1

For the purposes of determining Average Daily Membership (ADM) for a given school year at a given public school pursuant to A.R.S § 15-901 (A)(2), the first day of membership for continuing or pre-enrolled students shall be defined as either the first day a student physically attends school or the first day that classroom instruction is offered, provided that such students physically attend school within the first ten school days. For all other students, the first day of membership shall be defined as the first day a student physically attends school. The definition of the first member day shall be applied consistently throughout the district or charter holder. (School Finance Policy SF-1)

<http://www.ade.az.gov/schoolfinance/FAQs/PoliciesProcedures/FirstDayAbsence.pdf>

Definitions

First day of membership – enrollment date

Continuing students – students enrolled in the same school on the last day of the preceding school year

Pre-enrolled students – students who are not continuing but who have registered (by written record) prior to the first day of classroom instruction

First day that classroom instruction is offered – first day of the calendar track to which a student is assigned (first scheduled day of school)

Intent of the policy

The Department of Education acknowledges that districts and charters are required to plan for and to provide resources for continuing and pre-enrolled students from the first day that classroom instruction is offered whether these students are present or absent. Since state aid for membership is based on the total number of student membership days generated during the first 100 days of classroom instruction, the provision of an option to begin counting membership days for continuing and pre-enrolled students from the first day of school rather than the first day of actual attendance is intended to provide financial benefits for districts and charters.

Implementation procedures

Choose an option

Every school district and charter school will first need to decide if they will continue to submit enrollment dates for all students based on the first day of actual attendance or if they wish to define the enrollment date for continuing and pre-enrolled students as the first day that classroom instruction is offered.

Option 1 – Enrollment date is the first day of actual attendance for all students

- Submit the enrollment date as the day the student began receiving instruction.
- Such students must be present on their enrollment date.

Option 2 – Enrollment date is the first day classroom instruction is offered for all continuing and pre-enrolled students and the first day of actual attendance for all others

- Submit the enrollment date for all continuing and pre-enrolled students as the first day classroom instruction is offered on the calendar track to which students are assigned.
- Such students must participate in (attend) school at some point within the first ten days of the calendar track to which they are assigned regardless of the length of the period of enrollment.
 - ◇ When absences are reported to SAIS, a student may not have a record of enrollment on the first day of a calendar track and a period of ten or more consecutive absences starting on the enrollment date.
 - ◇ When attendance is reported to SAIS, a student may not have a record of enrollment on the first day of a calendar track and a period of ten or more consecutive days showing zero minutes of attendance starting on the date of enrollment.
 - ◇ A student who has a record of enrollment on the first day of a calendar track, but has no records showing that he/she participated in instruction at any time during the first ten days of the calendar track to which he/she is assigned will fail in SAIS

integrity processing with error message: *Student has not participated in instruction during the first 10 days of the calendar track to which he/she is assigned. Student's enrollment must be deleted.*

- Continuing students who do not attend school during the first ten days school is in session are subject to summer withdrawal.
- This option is applicable only to the first day of the **first calendar track** to which a student is assigned. If an absence equaling a student's full time equivalency (FTE) exists in SAIS on the first day of the second, third or fourth calendar track a student has been assigned to, the student's records will fail in SAIS integrity processing with error message: *Student may not have a full day absence on the first day of membership of a mid-year track change.*
- This option is not applicable to the first day of a readmission. Readmission occurs when a student who has been withdrawn from a school reenters the same school during the same school year. The date of readmission is always defined as the first day a student physically attends school following the date of withdrawal. If an absence equaling a student's FTE exists in SAIS on the student's readmission date, the student's records will fail in SAIS integrity processing with error message: *Student may not have a full day absence on the first day of membership unless absence falls on the first day of school as defined in the calendar track to which the student is assigned.*

Applicable to either option

- The first day of membership for students who are neither continuing nor pre-enrolled is always defined as the first day of actual attendance.
- When an enrollment date other than the first day of the calendar track exists in SAIS, records must also exist to show that the student was present on the day of enrollment.
 - ◊ If an absence equaling a student's FTE exists in SAIS on the student's enrollment date, and the enrollment date is not the first day of the calendar track, the student's records will fail in SAIS integrity processing with error message: *Student may have only a partial absence on first day of membership.*
 - ◊ If attendance is ever submitted during the membership period for a student whose enrollment date is not the first day of the calendar track, and there is no record of attendance on the enrollment date, the student's records will fail in SAIS integrity processing with error message: *Zero minutes of attendance on the first day of a membership is not allowed.*

Summary

Prior to fiscal year 2007, ADE School Finance regulations disallowed a full day of absence to exist in SAIS on a student's enrollment date. From fiscal year 2007 forward, new regulations allow full day absences on, and for up to nine days after, a student's enrollment date. However, in order to justify an enrollment on the first day of a school, a student must be continuing or pre-enrolled and must participate in school at some point within the first ten days of the calendar track to which he or she is assigned.